

Thursday March 17, 2022

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Aruba's ONLY English newspaper

Texas mail ballot rejections soar under new restrictions

By PAUL J. WEBER and ACA- thing above 2% is usually **CIA CORONADO**

Associated Press

threw out mail votes at an rector of the Election Data abnormally high rate dur- and Science Lab at the ing the nation's first primary Massachusetts Institute of of 2022, rejecting nearly 23,000 ballots outright under tougher voting rules that are part of a broad campaign by Republicans to reshape American elections, according to an analysis by The Associated

Roughly 13% of mail ballots returned in the March 1 primary were discarded and uncounted across 187 counties in Texas. While historical primary comparisons are lacking, the double-digit rejection rate would be far beyond what is typical in a general election, when experts say anycause for attention.

"My first reaction is 'yikes," AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Texas said Charles Stewart III, di-Technology. "It says to me that there's something seriously wrong with the way that the mail ballot policy is being administered."

> Republicans promised new layers of voting rules would make it "easier to vote and harder to cheat." But the final numbers recorded by AP lay bare the glaring gulf between that objective and the obstacles, frustration and tens of thousands of uncounted votes resulting from tighter restrictions and rushed implementa-

> > Continued on next page



Pam Gaskin talks about her mail-in primary election ballot at her home Monday, Jan. 31, 2022, in Missouri City, Texas. "It took me three tries and 28 days but I got my ballot and I voted," said Gaskin, 75, of Houston. Like many rejected mail voters, she did not list a matching identification number that Texas' new law requires.

Associated Press







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TEDAY.

Continued from Front

In Texas, a state former President Donald Trump easily won although by a smaller margin than 2016, the trouble of navigating new rules was felt in counties big and small, red and blue. But the rejection rate was higher in counties that lean Democratic (15.1%) than Republican (9.1%).

The unusually high rejection rate to start America's midterm election season is expected to put more attention on changes to the ballot box elsewhere in the country. Texas' election was the debut of more restrictive voting rules the GOP raced to put on the books across the U.S. in time for the midterm elections, a push that took particular aim at mail voting that soared in popularity during the pandemic.

At least 17 other states in the coming months will



A man passes an early voting poll site, on Feb. 14, 2022, in San Antonio.

Associated Press

cast ballots under tougher election laws, in part driven by Trump's baseless and persistent claims of rampant fraud in the 2020 election. The rejected ballots in Texas alone far exceeds the hundreds of even possible voter fraud cases the AP has previously identified

in six battleground states that Trump disputed.

The AP counted 22,898 rejected ballots across Texas by contacting all 254 counties and obtaining final vote reconciliation reports. Some smaller counties did not provide data or respond to requests, but

the 187 counties that provided full numbers to AP accounted for 85% of the 3 million people who voted in the primary. Last week, AP reported that 27,000 ballots had been flagged in Texas for initial rejection, meaning those voters still had time to "fix" their ballot for several days after the primary and have it count. But the final figures suggest most voters did not.

The most rejections were around Houston, a Democratic stronghold, where Harris County elections officials reported that nearly 7,000 mail ballots — about 19%—were discarded. During the last midterm elections in 2018, Texas' largest county only rejected 135 mail ballots. Harris County elections officials said they received more than 8,000 calls since January from voters seeking help, which they attributed to "confusion and frustration" over the new requirements.

In the five counties won by Trump that had the most mail-in primary voters, a combined 2,006 mailed ballots were rejected, a rate of 10% of the total. In the counties won by Biden with the most mail-in voters, which include most of Texas' biggest cities, a combined 14,020 votes were similarly rejected, which amounted to 15.7%.

In rural East Texas, Annette Young voted by mail like usual but received a surprising letter a week after the primary, informing her that the ballot never counted because it didn't comply with a new state law requiring mail voters to include personal identification numbers.

"I just threw it right in the trash," she said.

Most of the rejected ballots, according to county election officials and the Texas secretary of state, failed to adhere to the new identification requirements. The changes were part of the sweeping overhaul to Texas' elections that Republican Gov. Greg Abbott signed into law in October, saying at the time that "no one who is eligible to vote will be denied the opportunity to vote."

Abbott and top Texas Republicans who championed the changes have largely been silent about the high rejection rates. Abbott's office did not respond to requests seeking comment, and messages for Republican Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and Republican House Speaker Dade Phelan also went unanswered. Republican state Sen. Paul Bettencourt, a proponent of the changes, said in an email that one issue might have been that ballot instructions printed in different ink colors — red for signature, black for identification numbers — might have left voters with the wrong impression they did not need to provide both. Federal data on discarded mail ballots in general elections show few instances of double-digit rejection rates. The outliers include Indiana (14.5%) in 2006, Oregon (12.7%) in 2010 and New York (13.7%) in 2018, according to records from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.





In conjunction with the national holiday Himno y Bandera (Day of the National Anthem and Flag), Aruba Today will not be published on Friday, March 18th, 2022. We will resume our regular printing schedule on Saturday, March, 19th, 2022.



Lake Powell hits historic low, raising hydropower concerns

Associated Press SALT LAKE CITY (AP) - A

massive reservoir known as a boating mecca dipped below a critical threshold on Tuesday raising new concerns about a source of power that millions of people in the U.S. West rely on for electricity.

Lake Powell's fall to below 3.525 feet (1.075 meters) puts it at its lowest level since the lake filled after the federal government dammed the Colorado River at Glen Canyon more than a half century ago — a record marking yet another sobering realization of the impacts of climate change and megadrought.

It comes as hotter temperatures and less precipitation leave a smaller amount flowing through the over-tapped Colorado River. Though water scarcity is hardly new in the region, hydropower concerns at Glen Canyon Dam in Arizona reflect that a future western states assumed was years away is approaching — and fast.

"We clearly weren't sufficiently prepared for the need to move this quickly," said John Fleck, director of the University of New Mexico's Water Resources Program.

Federal officials are confident water levels will rise in the coming months once snow melts in the Rockies. But they warn that more may need to be done to ensure Glen Canyon Dam can keep producing hydropower in the years ahead.



This September 2016 photo shows Glen Canyon Dam near Page, Ariz., which impounds Lake

Associated Press

"Spring runoff will resolve the deficit in the short term," said Wayne Pullan, regional director for the U.S. Bureau Reclamation, which manages water and power in more than a dozen states. "However, our work is not done."

Though both Lake Powell and its downstream counterpart, Lake Mead, are dropping faster than expected, much of the region's focus has been on how to deal with water scarcity in Arizona, Nevada and California, not electricity supply.

For Glen Canyon Dam, the new level is 35 feet (11 meters) above what's considered "minimum power pool" — the level at which its turbines would stop producing hydroelectric pow-

If Lake Powell drops even more, it could soon hit "deadpool" — the point at which water likely would fail to flow through the dam and onto Lake Mead. Arizona, Nevada, California, and Mexico already are taking a combination of mandatory and voluntary cuts tied to Lake Mead's levels.

About 5 million customers in seven states — Arizona, Colorado, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming — buy power generated at Glen Canyon Dam.

The government provides it at a cheaper rate than energy sold on the wholesale market, which can be wind, solar, coal or natural gas.

For the cities, rural electric cooperatives and tribes that rely on its hydropower, less water flowing through Glen Canyon Dam can therefore increase total energy costs. Customers bear the brunt.

The situation worries the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, one of the 50 tribal suppliers that rely on the dam for hydropower. It plans to spend \$4.5 million on an alternative energy supply this

"It's a very sensitive issue for all of us right now," said Walter Haase, the tribal utility's general manager.

Bureau of Reclamation officials last summer took an unprecedented step and diverted water from reservoirs in Wyoming, New Mexico, Utah and Colorado in what they called "emergency releases" to replenish Lake Powell. In January, the agency also held back water scheduled to be released through the dam to prevent it from dipping even lower.

Anxieties stretch beyond hydropower. Last summer, tourism and boating were hobbled by falling lake levels. The Glen Canyon National Recreation Area is taking advantage of the low levels at Lake Powell to extend boat ramps. Most are now closed or come with warnings to launch at your own risk.

In Page, Arizona, which benefits from recreation at Lake Powell, officials launched a campaign this month to highlight that lower levels aren't necessarily bad for visitors, noting receding shorelines have revealed sunken boats, canyons and other geographic wonders.

"There's tremendous amounts of history out there," City Councilman Richard Leightner said. "You can see some of the old dwellings, and parts of the Old Spanish Trail are accessible now. It's an opportunity, but it just depends on the person's frame of mind."

The record low also comes after a tough year for hydropower. Last year, as U.S. officials worked to expand renewable energy, drought in the West drove a decline in hydropower generation, making it harder for officials to meet demand.

400 bulletproof vests donated to Ukraine stolen in NYC

NEW YORK (AP) — About Ukrainian National Wom- Police departments in the 400 bulletproof vests destined for Ukraine were stolen from a New York City organization non-profit that's been leading an effort to collect and ship glary and "were informed ing Russia's invasion. tactical gear to people in the warzone, police said Wednesday.

Police say the used vests, donated by local law enforcement, were taken from the offices of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America and the

en's League of America on Second Avenue in Manhattan.

Police responded around 9:15 a.m. to a call of a burthat approximately 400 The Sutfolk County Sheritt's bullet proof vests that Office on Long Island said were removed from the it worked with the Ukrailocation," NYPD Sergeant Edward Riley said.

A message seeking comment was left with the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America.

New York City area have donated hundreds of decommissioned bulletproof vests to charities supporting Ukrainian forces fight-

nian Congress Committee of America to donate 450 used, decommissioned vests, but could not confirm that the vests that were stolen were the ones it donated.

The sheriff's office stops using the vests after five years, but officials said they remain sturdy enough to offer protection in warfare.

"It is despicable that some- transported into Ukraine. one would break into a The items were most likely building to steal supplies and materials intended to aid those affected by this humanitarian crisis," said Vicki DiStefano, a spokesperson for Suffolk County Sheriff Errol Toulon Jr.

Dobriansky, Andrij spokesperson for the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, said last week that the plan was for donated gear to be shipped by air to Poland and then

to be used by civilian security and medical teams, including citizens who have joined the fight against the Russian military, not Ukrainian soldiers themselves, officials said.



9 dead in Texas crash involving U. of Southwest golf teams

By JILL BLEED and ANITA SNOW

Associated Press

Nine people died in a fiery, head-on collision in West Texas, including six students and a coach from a New Mexico university who were returning home from a golf tournament, authorities said.

A pickup truck crossed the center line of a two-lane road in Andrews County, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) east of the New Mexico state line on Tuesday evening and crashed into a van carrying members of the University of the Southwest men's and women's golf teams, said Sgt. Steven Blanco of the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Six students and a faculty member were killed in the crash along with the driver and a passenger in the pickup truck, Blanco said. Two students were taken in critical condition by helicopter to a hospital in Lubbock, about 110 miles (180 kilometers) to the northeast.

Family members confirmed freshman Laci Stone was among those who died in the crash. Stone graduated from Nocona High School



Emergency responders work the scene of a fatal crash late Tuesday, March 15, 2022 in Andrews County, Texas.

Associated Press

in Texas in 2021, where she played golf, volleyball and softball.

"She has been an absolute ray of sunshine during this short time on earth," her mother, Chelsi Stone, said on Facebook. "... We will never be the same after this and we just don't understand how this happened to our amazing, beautiful, smart, joyful girl."

Laci Stone was majoring in global business manage-

ment, according to her biography on the golf team's website.

Golf coach Tyler James also died, according to his mother, June James, adding that she knew little about the circumstances. He coached the men and the women.

"We don't know what happened. It's a huge investigation. We don't have any idea as of yet," James said during a brief phone interview. "This is kind of a shock." Team member Jasmin Collum had been scheduled to play but at the last minute decided instead to visit her parents in Houston, her mother said.

"Otherwise, who knows?" Tonya Collum said. "I told her God has a plan for her and that's why she's OK. We knew all those people on board. Basically the whole team is gone or in the hospital."

The National Transportation Safety Board will send a 12-member "go team" to the crash site, including experts in human performance, vehicle and motor carrier factors and accident reconstruction, agency spokesman Eric Weiss said. The team is expected to arrive later Wednesday, he said.

"We'll try to find out not only what happened, but why it happened, so we can possibly prevent things like this from happening in the future," he said.

The golf team was traveling in a 2017 Ford Transit van that was towing a box trailer when it collided with a 2007 Dodge pickup truck, Weiss said. Both vehicles caught fire after the collision, he said, calling it a "high-energy event."

The crash happened on a two-lane asphalt highway where the speed limit is 75 mph (120 kph), though investigators have not yet determined how fast either vehicle was traveling, Weiss said.

The University of the Southwest is a private, Christian college located in Hobbs, New Mexico, near the state's border with Texas.

Disney workers plan walkout to protest 'Don't Say Gay' bill



Marchers wave flags as they walk at the St. Pete Pier during a rally and march to protest against a bill dubbed by opponents as the "Don't Say Gay" bill Saturday, March 12, 2022, in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Associated Press

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press OPLANDO FIG. (AP)

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Disney workers are planning walkouts during their breaks every day this week to protest CEO Bob Chapek's slow response in publicly

criticizing Florida legislation that critics have dubbed the "Don't Say Gay" bill.

The act of protest will culminate next Tuesday with a general walkout by LGBTQ workers and their supporters at Disney worksites in California, Florida and elsewhere, the group of Disney employees said this week on their website.

Organizers asked Disney workers to check in online with their plans to participate in the full-scale walkout for next week. "We must make sure we have large enough numbers to be successful," they said.

Statements by Disney leadership over the Florida legislation "have utterly failed to match the magnitude of the threat to LGBTQIA+ safety represented by this legislation," the group said. The bill bars instruction on "sexual orientation or gender identity" in kindergarten through grade 3. Republican lawmakers pushing the legislation had argued that parents, not teachers, should be the ones talking to their children about gen-

der issues during their early formative years. The legislation has attracted scrutiny from President Joe Biden, who called it "hateful," as well as other Democrats who argue it demonizes LGBTQ people.

The legislation has been sent to Republican Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who is expected to sign it.

As the state's largest private-sector employer — Walt Disney World outside Orlando had more than 75,000 workers before the coronavirus pandemic — Disney has contributed huge amounts of money to Florida's political parties and politicians and has wielded incredible influence on the state's government.

At the beginning of last week, Chapek sent a message to Disney workers affirming the company's support for LGBTQ rights but also saying that corporate statements often don't do much to change minds and can be "weaponized" by either side.

Rather than make an early public statement against the legislation, company officials had been working behind the scenes with Florida lawmakers "to achieve a better outcome," but they hadn't been successful, despite "our longstanding relationships with those lawmakers," Chapek told Disney shareholders a few days later.

With his public responses being panned by some Disney workers and supporters, Chapek last Friday apologized and said the company was pausing all political donations in Florida.



Russia's invasion drives NATO rethink of Europe force stance

By LORNE COOK

BRUSSELS (AP) — In an underground archive below NATO's headquarters lies a key document that sets out the vision of both NATO and Russia about their future ties, as it was shaped almost a quarter of a century ago. The room is sealed. White gloves must be worn to handle the text. "NATO and Russia do not consider each other as adversaries. They share the goal of overcoming the vestiges of earlier confrontation and competition and of strengthening mutual trust and cooperation," reads the preamble of the NATO-Russia Founding Act, signed in May 1997.

Things looked brighter then, less than a decade after the Iron Curtain collapsed and relations between Moscow and the West thawed. Today, with thousands of Ukrainians sheltering in bunkers across the country and millions forced from their homes, the document appears to be a dead letter. When the act was signed, the post-Cold War period was ushering in a time of defense spending cuts as the threat from Moscow receded. NATO and Russia made important pledges on arms control and



U.S. Secretary for Defense Lloyd J. Austin III, left, speaks with Poland's Defense Minister Mariusz Blaszczak, right, and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg during a meeting of the North Atlantic Council at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Wednesday, March 16, 2022.

Associated Press

improved transparency about their military activi-

importantly, they Most committed to limit the deployment of their forces in Europe.

But on Wednesday, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg acknowledged that the document had been drawn up in very different times and that relations with Russia must change.

"We're in a totally different security environment. At that stage, we actually foresaw Russia as a strategic partner, working with them. Since then, Russia has invaded Georgia, illegally annexed Crimea and now also invaded Ukraine," Stoltenberg told reporters. In talks at NATO's Brussels headquarters, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and his counterparts weighed what defenses to set up on the organization's eastern flank, from Estonia in the north through Latvia, Lithuania and Poland down to Bulgaria and Romania on the Black Sea.

The aim is to deter President Vladimir Putin from ordering an invasion of any of the 30 allies; not just for the duration of this war but for the next 5-10 years. Before launching it, Putin had demanded that NATO stop expanding and withdraw its forces from the east. The opposite is happening.

"Today, we have tasked our military commanders to develop options across all domains. Land, air, sea, cyber and space," Stoltenberg said. He said he expects to hear about those options within weeks.

"On land, our new posture should include substantially more forces in the eastern part of the Alliance, at higher readiness, with more prepositioned equipment and supplies," he said. "In the air, more allied air power, and strengthened integrated air and missile defense."

At sea, Stoltenberg said, there would be "carrier strike groups, submarines and significant numbers of combat ships on a persistent basis." NATO should also "train and exercise more often, and in greater numbers."

Those options will be studied by NATO leaders at their next major summit in Madrid in June.

NATO only began stationing troops on its eastern flank after Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014.

7.3 magnitude quake hits north Japan, tsunami risk receding

By MARI YAMAGUCHI **Associated Press**

TOKYO (AP) — A powerful 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Fukushima in northern Japan on Wednesday evening, triggering a tsunami advisory and plunging more than 2 million homes in the Tokyo area into darkness.

The region is part of northern Japan that was devastated by a deadly 9.0 quake and tsunami 11 years ago plant meltdowns, spewing massive radiation that still The Tokyo Electric Power makes some parts uninhabitable.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said there was no longer a tsunami threat though the Japan Meteorological Agency kept its malities at the site, which

NHK national television said tsunami waves of 20 centimeters (8 inches) already reached shore in Ishinomaki, about 390 kilometers (242 miles) northeast of Tokyo.

NHK footage showed broken walls of a department store building fell to the ground and shards of windows scattered on the street near the main train station in Fukushima city, about 60 kilometers (36 that also triggered nuclear miles) west from the coastline.

Company Holdings, which operates the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant where the cooling systems failed after the 2011 disaster, said workers found no abnorlow risk advisory in place. was in the process of being

decommissioned.

Japan's Nuclear Regulation Authority said a fire alarm went off at the turbine building of No. 5 reactor at the Fukushima Daiichi but there was no actual fire. Water pumps for the spent fuel cooling pool at two of the four reactors at Fukushima Daini briefly stopped, but later resumed operation. Fukushima Daini is also set for decommissioning.

The Japan Meteorological Agency said the quake hit at 11:36 p.m. at a depth of 60 kilometers (36 miles) below the sea.

Japan's Air Self-Defense Force said it dispatched fighter jets from the Hyakuri base in Ibaraki prefecture, just south of Fukushima, for information gathering and damage assessment.



Walls are fallen at an apartment in Fukushima, northern Japan Thursday, March 17, 2022, following an earthquake.

Associated Press

NHK said there were reports were without electricity in of fire, damage to buildings and falling rocks in litate town in Fukushima. There was no word on any casu-

More than 2.2 million homes the companies.

14 northeastern prefectures including the Tokyo region, serviced by TEPCO and another utility, Tohoku Electric Power Co., according to



U.N. human rights council asked to act against Myanmar army

By GRANT PECK **Associated Press**

BANGKOK (AP) — The main opposition organization in military-ruled Myanmar on Wednesday urged the United Nations Human Rights Council to act strongly to restore democracy in the Southeast Asian nation, saying that the international community should put sanctions and other pressures on the country's generals.

The council, at its meeting in Geneva, received a similar appeal from Thomas Andrews, the U.N. special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar.

A report submitted a day earlier by U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said evidence suggests Myanmar's military rulers bear responsibility for abuses constituting crimes against humanity and war crimes. The army seized power a year ago from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi and since then has ruthlessly sought to suppress the widespread opposition to its rule.

The National Unity Government said it would like the international community to take action against the military, including sanctions and prosecutions under international law. The group, established by elected Myanmar lawmakers who



In this image taken from drone video provided by Free Burma Rangers, smoke arises from burning buildings in Waraisuplia village in Kayah State, Myanmar on Feb. 18, 2022.

Associated Press

were not allowed to take their seats, considers itself the country's legitimate administrative body though it is forced to operate underaround. Initial efforts are underway to bring the issue to the International Criminal Court.

Andrews, in a report covering much of the same ground as Bachelet's, noted "the strong and swift action taken by (U.N.) Member States on behalf of the people of Ukraine and implores the international community to act similarly to protect the people of Myanmar. They too are under siege by a brutal and relentless military attack." Although many Western nations have imposed sanctions against Myanmar's military rulers, wider international pressure on them has been forestalled by Russia and China, who provide the generals with diplomatic and material support.

The report from Bachelet's human rights office accused Myanmar security forces of showing "a flagrant disregard for human life, bombarding populated areas with airstrikes and heavy weapons and deliberately targeting civilians, many of whom have been shot in the head, burned to death, arbitrarily arrested, tortured or used as human shields."

It charged that the tactics of the military — known as the Tatmadaw — including targeted shots-to-the-head and immolation of victims, "suggest that such conduct is not misconduct or misbehavior of a few, but rather the result of instructions handed down through the command structure to use lethal force taraetina civilians."

"Taking into consideration the extent, type, and level of atrocity of Tatmadaw's actions, it is highly improbable that soldiers acted independently outside the chain of command." said the report.

The alleged crimes include killings, forcible transfer of population, imprisonment, torture, persecution on political grounds and enforced disappearances.

"The appalling breadth and scale of violations of international law suffered by the people of Myanmar demand a firm, unified, and resolute international response," Bachelet said.

The report says that more than one-fifth of the more than 1,500 deaths credibly attributed to the actions of the security forces were people who died in detention, "either from lack of adequate medical attention to victims' injuries suffered consequent to crackdowns and raids, or as result of cruel and inhuman treatment and torture especially during interrogation."

In cases where the victims' bodies were returned to their families, they exhibited signs of abuse.

In addition to repressing its opponents in the cities, the army is conducting largescale offensive in the countryside to wipe out homegrown militias opposed to military rule.

The offensives are conducted with airstrikes, helicopter gunships, artillery, and mortars, and are reported to include "indiscriminate attacks often in populated areas, in flagrant disregard for human life and property," according to the report.

WHO Chief: World's worst health crisis is in Ethiopia



World Health Organization director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus speaks during a media conference at an EU Africa summit in Brussels, Feb. 18, 2022.

Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — As much is focused on the bloodof the world's attention shed in Ukraine, the head of the World Health Organization said Wednesday there's "nowhere on earth where the health of millions of people is more under threat" than Ethiopia's Tigray region.

WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebrevesus said the situation in Tiaray from where he hails was "catastrophic," 'sealed off from the outside world" for about 500 days. "No food aid has been delivered since the middle of

December," Tedros told a press briefing, adding that about three quarters of health facilities assessed by WHO in the region had been destroyed. He said month. there was no treatment for about 40,000 people with HIV in the region.

"Yes, I'm from Tigray and this crisis affects me, my family and my friends very personally," Tedros said. "But I, the director general of WHO, I have a duty to protect and promote health wherever it's under threat," he said. saying the region had been "And there is nowhere on earth where the health of millions of people is more under threat than Tigray." Tedros said the U.N. health agency had now documented 43 attacks on health care workers and facilities in Ukraine since the Russian invasion began last

WHO has now opened supply lines to many cities in Ukraine, but some access challenges remained. The agency continued to call for attacks on health workers and facilities to stop.

But Tedros said the crisis in Ukraine was "far from the only crisis to which WHO is responding," citing ongoing problems in Yemen, Syria and Ethiopia.

Earlier this year, the government of Ethiopia sent a letter to the World Health Organization, accusing Tedros of "misconduct" after his sharp criticism of the war and humanitarian crisis in the country.

WORLD NEWS A7 THURSDAY 17 MARCH 2022



Journalist killed in Mexico, eighth so far this year



Reporters photograph the red brick home where journalist Armando Linares was shot dead, in Zitacuaro, Michoacan state, Mexico, Wednesday, March 16, 2022.

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Another journalist was shot to death in Mexico on Tuesday, the eighth murdered so far this year in an unprecedented spate of killings that has made Mexico the most dangerous place in the world for the press.

Reporters and photographers have been murdered this year in Mexico at the rate of almost one a week, despite claims from the government that the situation is under control.

Prosecutors in the western state of Michoacan said reporter Armando Linares was shot to death at a home in the town of Zitacuaro. His killing came six weeks after the slaving of a colleague, Roberto Toledo, from the same outlet Monitor Michoacan. It was Linares who announced Toledo's death Jan. 31 in a video posted to social me-

in the mountains west of Mexico City.

The area has been plagued by illegal logging and drug gangs, local governance disputes and deforestation linked to expanding avocado production. Logging

has damaged the pine and fir forests where the butterflies spend the winter after migrating from the United States and Canada. Linares served as director at the Monitor Michoacan website, which on Tuesday continued to show an article he had written about a cultural festival celebrating monarch butterflies.

There was no immediate information on a possible motive in the killing.

Toledo, a camera operator and video editor for Monitor Michoacan, was shot Jan. 31 as he prepared for an interview in Zitacuaro.

At the time of Toledo's death, Linares told The Associated Press he had received several death threats after enrolling in a government journalist protection program.

Asked who he thought was behind the threats, Linares said "they pass themselves Zitacuaro is one of the clos- off as an armed group, est towns to the monarch they pass themselves off as butterfly wintering grounds a criminal gang. We can't verify whether it is true or not that they are this armed gang."

> Criminals in Mexico often claim they are part of a drug cartel in order to instill fear in their victims, whether or not they really are.

just like in the rest of the country, and Monitor worked on a lot of issues like illegal logging, given that we are near the monarch reserve," Linares said in early February. "We wrote a lot about illegal logging and also a lot of issues like corruption in the municipal government."

Drug cartels in Mexico often make money by protecting illegal logging, or extorting

"We have organized crime, protection payments from wrote "I join those calling avocado growers.

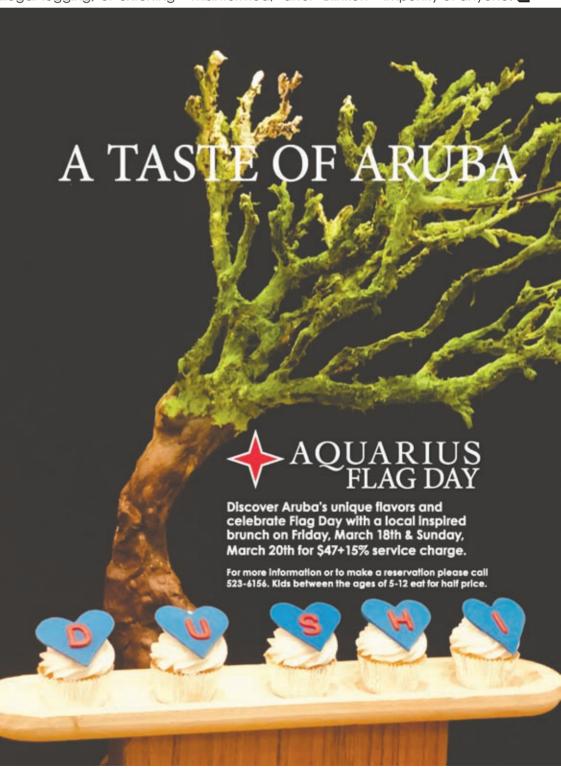
> "The nightmare continues for the press in Mexico," the press group Reporters Without Borders wrote in its social media accounts.

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has reacted angrily to worldwide criticism of the killings. In February, López Obrador said U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken was misinformed, after Blinken

for greater accountability and protections for Mexican journalists."

López Obrador claims the government is investigating all of the killings and suggested Blinken received bad information from other U.S. agencies, mentioning the CIA, FBI and Drug Enforcement Administration.

"They're tricking him," he said. "We don't tolerate the impunity of anyone."





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Aruba's National Anthem: 'ARUBA DUSHI TERA'

ORANJESTAD — In the years 1975 and 1976, the government wanted to give Aruba it's own national anthem and flag, since these two are the symbols that identify of each country. The flag and anthem are symbols of love and patriotism. It was Gilberto François "Betico" Croes who made this special request.

'Aruba Dushi Tera' is the name of our national anthem. The history of this song started in 1951. It was a composition of two very well-known musicians, Rufo Wever and Juan Chabaya "Padu" Lampe. They felt the urge to compose a song that would express the love of our people for our island and the feeling of patriotism of each person.

Together with 'De Trupialen' group and under the guidance of Frère Alexius they managed to put this song in their repertoire with the purpose of making it popular. The song became very popular in a short time. In 1954, they even recorded the song on a long play disc. The song was played during every official ceremony of Aruba.

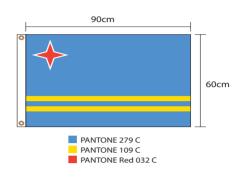
In the 70's installed a comisión consisting of Maybeline Arends-Croes, Rufo Odor, Padu Lampe, Eddy Bennet, Hubert "Lio" Booi y Rufo Wever to see if they could proclaim 'Aruba Dushi tera' as the national anthem. The commitee unanimously recommended this to be played on the air waves. By that time, a third verse had been added which stated the cordiality and



the love of freedom for our island.

On March 16th, 1976, the island council approved 'Aruba Dushi Tera' as the Aruba's national anthem, and on March 18th, 1976, during an oficial ceremony at the Wilhelmina Stadium in Dakota, the flag was raised for the first time while 'Aruba Dushi Tera' resonated for the first time as the national anthem of Aruba. The presentation was under the guidance of Maybeline Arends-Croes, together with the Philharmonic Orchestra of Aruba directed by Joy Kock.

There is a sculpture of Rufo Wever, Juan Chabaya "Padu" Lampe and Hubert "Lio" Booi while they were writing and composing our National Anthem sitting on a piano. You can view this sculpture by sitting Plaza Padu, which is diagonally across the Fort Zoutman tower, or you can easily find it by searching "Plaza PAdu" on Google Maps.



Lyrics of "Aruba Dushi Tera":

Aruba patria aprecia, nos cuna venera, chikito y simpel bo por ta pero si respeta.

Refrain:

O, Aruba, Dushi tera, nos baranca tan stima nos amor pa bo t'asina grandi cu n'tin nada pa kibre!

Bo playanan tan admira cu palma tur dorna, bo escudo y bandera ta orguyo di nos tur!

Refrain:

3. Grandesa di bo pueblo ta su gran cordialidad, cu Dios por guia y conserva su amor pa libertad!

Refrain:



ORANJESTAD/PALM BEACH St. Patrick's Day a national holiday and the Day of the National Anthem and Flag, in Papiamento Dia di Himno y Bandera. This day is marked by the blue color we find in the national flag.

- Today is St. Patrick's Day. St Patrick's Day, on March The color that represents 17, remembers one of this day is green. Friday is Ireland's patron saints, St Patrick. It largely celebrates Irish-American culture in the United States. This day is the traditional death date of Saint Patrick (c. AD 385-461), and although he was not born Irish, he has become an

Aruba its Green Thursday and Blue Friday

heritage, mostly through his service across Ireland in the 5th century. Many stories are told in connection with St. Patrick. The threeleaf clover was said to be used by the saintly bishop to explain the Trinity to the pagans, which is why it is such a common St. Patrick's Day symbol today. Another legend has Patrick driving all the snakes out of Ireland; snakes were a popular symbol among the Irish pagans. He is certainly one of the most revered saints in the Catholic Church.

Day of the National An- table conference in the

important part of the Irish them and Flag

Probably the most popular national holiday on Aruba is the day of the national anthem and flag,"Dia di Himno y Bandera". A strong sense of pride is displayed allover as Arubans celebrate their Flag and Anthem Day. The Flag of Aruba was officially adopted on March 18th 1976, along with the official anthem "Aruba Dushi Tera" composed by Padu del Caribe, Hubert Booi and Rufo Wever. March 18th was also chosen for the celebration of the national anthem and flag of Aruba because during the round

Netherlands, on that date in 1948, for the first time a motion was presented to her Majesty Queen Juliana, which called for the self-determination of the Aruban people.







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Papillon: the butterfly effect of magnificent food

PALM BEACH — Do you remember the film "Papillon" starring Steve McQueen? Papillon restaurant is the island's example where `life imitates art.' The décor, especially the restrooms, was inspired by the movie. For more than a decade this restaurant has built a reputation with the fusion of classic French cuisine, Dutch and Caribbean flavors. Welcome in the world of wonders where ambiance, taste and service come together and you feel you are being welcomed in the home of the owner and her team.

"We find it really important that our guests have fun; can relax while listening to live music while their taste buds are being tickled by France, The Netherlands and the Caribbean. We offer a unique fusion of dishes and a night not to forget," says owner Tina. She points out that all Covid-protocol is in place here, they are very keen on hygiene and offer outside dining on a cozy, elegant terrace with social distancing in place and right on the high-rise strip.

Fresh oysters, caviar and wild boar

You are on vacation, life is to enjoy! If you want something special, a different flow than the usual then Papillon is the place to go. Foodies are in heaven here with classic French dishes such as Foie Gras, Frog Legs, fresh Oysters coming in on a weekly basis from Holland, Escargots, Dover Sole à la Meunière flown in from Europe and filleted at the table, Duck Breast seared on the skin, roasted and braised Lamb in Balashi beer and slow braised Wild Boar Shank. Do not leave without trying the exclusive recommendation: Caviar! All of





this combined with an extensive wine list from around the world makes Papillon a must-do on your Aruban vacation.

Let the music play!

We will give you another reason to visit: on Monday's and Friday's the famous Marisela who enchants you with her acoustic performance accompanied by percussion only; on Thursday's and Saturday's you can enjoy the tunes of live sax player Jairo and on Sunday's and Tuesday's Jose Herrera will enchants you with his keyboard talent. The musicians interact with the guests, requests can be send in, the live tunes definitely add to the experience.

Vegetarian vibes present

Impressive vegetarian/vegan dishes are set

up especially for the guests by the chef and Meredith from Vegan Aruba. "We offer vegan choices that are really good and tasty. Our daily soup is always vegan too." What are you waiting for, make sure to pay a visit to this elegant yet laid-back restaurant while on Aruba. You are most welcome!

Papillon Restaurant is located at The Village across the Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort &Casino and within walking distance of all other major hotels.

Make your reservation today at:

info@papillonaruba.com

or call/WhatsApp + 00297 6995400

Open Daily: 5pm – 10.00pm – Early Bird from 5pm – 7pm

For all menus and specials visit the website: www.papillonaruba.com.





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The miami new media festival 2021-22 xvi edition "new media art and the pandemic"

On Thursday, March 17th starting at 7:00 pm outside the Stichting Rancho Center

Oranjestad - The Miami New Media Festival is a multimedia platform established in the city of Miami, Florida, USA by the Arts **Foundation** Connection and made by Venezuelans since 2006. It promotes art through the exploration of new technologies and interactive narrative, such as the video art, animation, digital art and interactive mapping.

The festival presents Indoor and Outdoor screenings in cities in Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe and



the USA. Since its creation, this festival has promoted more than 300 artists from 20 different countries, more than 500 videos, installations, 3D digital art and

performances. Under the representation for the Insular and Continental Caribbean of Jimmy Yánez - International Official Curator & Museographer. @jimmyyanez_4759 The artists selected by the Jimmy Yánez Jury: Jean Michell Rolland (Marseille-France) Jérémy Griffaud & Julien Griffaud (NiceFrance) Isabel Pérez Del Pulgar (Douarnenez-France) Gil Zablodovsky & Lali Tsipi Michaeli (Tel Aviv-Israel) Silvia De Gennaro (Rome-Italy) Ionee Waterhouse (Agrigento-Italy) Alydia Wever (Aruba-Netherlands) Adonis Ferro (Havana-Cuba) The artists selected by the Adriana Meneses Imber Jury: Linda Phillips (Venezuela-Colombia) Maria Luisa Sanin Pena (Colombia) Patricia Rodriguez (Ecuador) Santiago Carlini (Spain) Carmen Isasi (Spain) It is a free invitation and for the general public.

Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa participates in Aruba Doet 2022

Eagle Beach - Last week volunteers had to re-paint Sunday, on March 13thvarious departments of Manchebo Beach Resort and Spa participated in this year's Aruba Doet.

The team consisted of the maintenance team, garden team, front desk team, and sales & marketing team for a total of 11 volunteers. The project that was chosen was La Salle College in Oranjestad, where the

various walls and items at the school and re-furbish the seating areas outside. The teachers and students were happy and grateful with the finished result that gave the school a nice lift.

Manchebo Beach Resort &Spa has actively participated for 7 years with voluntary initiatives and contributions throughout the island. Manchebo's Team is





firmly committed to 'giving' nership with Oranje Fonds. has to offer. Every year the a helping hand' and assisting whenever needed, giving the team members a sense of "Love, Cooperation, Spiritual Enlightenment & Togetherness"

ARUBA DOET is organized by CEDE ARUBA in partCEDE Aruba is a development and co-financing organization that supports programs and projects in the field of welfare in Aruba. The Oranje Fonds is the biggest national fund in the social area and showcases the best of the Kingdom

foundations supports organizations and initiatives that strengthen social cohesion in the Netherlands and Caribbean. The Prince of Oranje and Princess Maxima are the protectors of the foundation.



How home improvement funds upgrade your new house to a home

By ANNIE MILLERBERND of **NerdWallet**

If you're preparing to buy a home, you've probably been saving up for the down payment and other closing costs. But if that nest egg can only get you through the front door, it may not be enough.

Once you own the home, you also own its peeling wallpaper, aging water heater and the carpet on which past owners' pets have traipsed. A home improvement fund can help ensure your newly purchased house is a wellfunctioning, comfortable home.

Here's why home improvement savings are a homebuyer must-have and how to build yours.

REPAIRS AND UPDATES ARE INEVITABLE

A home inspection identifies repairs the house needs now or eventually, giving some indication of the expenses you could be taking on.

If the inspection finds significant issues, your real estate agent may recommend asking the seller to pay. But in locations where housing inventory is tight and sellers have the advantage, buyers will likely need to cover those costs, says Bryson Lefmann, a real estate agent based in Richmond, Virgin-

If the seller can choose be-



A workman measures uses a rafter to mark a beam for trimming at a new housing site in Madison County, Miss., Tuesday, March 16, 2021.

Associated Press

tween a buyer who's asking for extra money and one who isn't, Lefmann says, "the seller is obviously going to pick an offer where the buyer has made significant concessions."

Even if the inspection is relatively clean, surprises can still surface.

Ethan Miller bought a home in Silver Spring, Maryland, in early 2021. His home inspection was done during the winter, so the air conditioner wasn't tested. On the first warm day of the year, the certified financial planner discovered he needed to replace it.

"I rarely talk to a client who, in their first year of homeownership, hasn't had a big unexpected repair or replacement," Miller says. Raquel Obumba, man-

aging broker at Millennial

Properties Realty in Atlanta , recommends first-time buyers opt for a one-year home warranty. For an annual fee, plus a service fee for each repair, a warranty covers appliances and sys-

She also recommends homeowners have savings for surprises that aren't covered under a home war-

tems that homeowners in-

surance may not.

ranty. These can include problems found in the inspection and incorrectly installed items.

CHEAP FINANCING OP-**TIONS ARE LIMITED**

The early months of homeownership aren't the best time to finance a repair, Miller says.

New homeowners may not have enough equity to borrow against, taking lowinterest home equity loans and lines of credit off the table, Miller says. Without them, inexpensive financing options are limited.

Personal loans can help in an emergency because

they're often funded within a couple of days after approval. Rates are between 6% and 36%, which Miller says are high compared with equity financing but may be lower than a regular credit card.

A zero-interest credit card offers free financing if you can pay it off within the typical 15- to 18-month promotional period. If not, you'll pay the card's regular rate once the promotion ends.

Borrowers with high credit scores usually qualify, but Miller says a recent home purchase could drive up your rate.

"If you just took on a mortgage, your credit report shows that you're in the most debt of your life, so you're not going to get the best interest rate," he says. Even if you're in a hurry, it pays to compare financing options to find the least expensive one.

WORK EXPENSES INTO YOUR PLAN

Here's how to plan for home improvement expenses before and after you buy.

SET A BUDGET: Decide your budget for updates before you start home shopping, Miller says, and share your limit with your realtor. That way, if you get excited about a house that needs a lot of work, the agent can remind you of your budget.

Lyft details fuel surcharge to help offset rising gas prices

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN **AP Business Writer**

Lyft will add a fuel surcharge of 55 cents to each ride given by drivers to offset surging gasoline prices. The company said earlier this week that it would be following DoorDash and Uber who also announced surcharges this week, and on Wednesday it released details of its plan.

The company said in a blog post that the surcharge will be effective beginning next week, with all of the money going directly to its drivers. The measure will remain in place for at least the next 60 days, Lyft said.

The surcharge is not appli-

cable in New York City due to a recent 5.3% increase in the minimum earnings standard for drivers there. The company is also working to have the surcharge implemented in Nevada, but said the state's regulatory requirements prevent an immediate rollout there. Lyft drivers can also apply for a Lyft Direct debit card 5% cash back on gas purannounced in January that can help most of its drivers get cash back on gas purchases.

"We'll continue monitor-

ing gas prices, listening to how drivers are being impacted, and finding ways to support them as things evolve," the San Francisco company said.

DoorDash said Tuesday that it will give drivers 10% cash back when they buy gas using DasherDirect, the company's debit card designed for drivers. The to get an increased 4% to company said it will also start paying weekly bonuschases through June 30. es for drivers who drive the Lyft also has a partnership most miles. And Uber anwith GetUpside that was nounced that it would start charging customers a fuel fee to offset higher costs for its delivery and ride-hailing drivers.

Russia's intensifying war in



In this April 30, 2020, file photo, Kia Neros that are part of the Lyft ride-hailing fleet sit unused in a lot near Empower Field at Mile High in Denver.

Associated Press

price of regular-grade gas- liters).

the Ukraine has helped to oline rose 79 cents over the push gas prices higher in past two weeks to a recordthe U.S. The average U.S. setting \$4.43 per gallon (3.8)



CROSSWORDBy THOMAS JOSEPH

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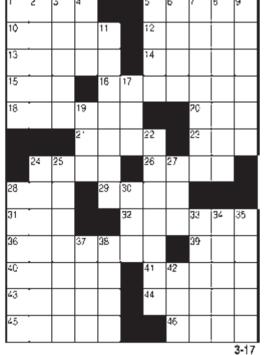


Yesterday's answer

46 Squeal 7 Goddess 27 ld -**DOWN** of the hunt 28 Train 8 Real brats 1 Throw stops 30 Gibbon or 9 Gems away 2 Colleague 11 Shaped gorilla 33 Brighten shrub of Spock and Sulu 17 Cart puller 34 Belly

3 "Olympia" 19 Future feature painter embryos. 35 Annoying 4 Toronto's 22 As a fellow prov. group 37 Fellow 38 Painter **5** "Get 24 Wyoming

lost!" city Holbein 42 Cow chow 6 Ultimate 25 Establish



AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-17CRYPTOQUOTE

PLJAH Z L JPULAQ $o \cup Q$

 $O \cup O$ M T MJMTU

TQSQWOQQWOU L' EKIDU!

— OULEKT KRERTOMWQ HKAG Yesterday's Cryptoquote: I AM NOT THE ARCHETYPAL LEADING MAN, THIS IS MAINLY FOR ONE REASON; AS YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED, THAVE NO HAIR. — PATRICK STEWART

Tired of waiting for driverless vehicles? Head to a farm



This 2021 photo provided by John Deere shows an autonomous tractor plowing a field, without a driver, on a farm in Blue Earth,

Associated Press

DES MOINES, lowa (AP) — For years Americans have been told autonomous technology was improving and that driverless vehicles were just around the corner.

Finally they're here, but to catch a glimpse of them, you'll need to go to a farm rather than look along city streets.

Beginning this fall, green 14-ton tractors that can plow day or night with no one sitting in the cab, or even watching nearby, will come off the John Deere factory assembly line in Waterloo, Iowa, harkening the age of autonomous farming.

The development follows more than a decade-long effort by the world's largest farm equipment manufacturer, and marks a milestone for automation advocates, who for years have been explaining why driverless cars aren't quite ready for prime time.

"I'm glad to see they're coming out and will stimulate the other technologies," said Raj Rajkumar, a professor at Carnegie Mel-Ion University and an expert in autonomous cars.

Deere isn't saying yet how much the autonomous tractors will cost but the new technology will be added onto tractors that sell for about \$500,000, said Ben Haber, a company spokesman. The company plans to operate the autonomous tractors on 10 to 50 farms by this fall before significantly increasing the number in following years. For the past decade, the supposedly imminent debut of autonomous ve-

hicles on city streets and freeways has been repeatedly pushed off as companies struggled to guarantee their safety.

But, Rajkumar notes, tractors have it easier because they don't need to contend with other vehicles, pedestrians or the complexities of an urban scene. Tractors can make use of consistent GPS data, unlike cars that can lose contact traveling through tunnels or amid tall buildings.

Or as Joel Dawson, a Deere production director, put it, "You aren't going to see a crosswalk in most cornfields in Iowa or Nebraska."

Modern tractors already have GPS guides that handle steering and turning to ensure optimum plowing, seeding and harvesting. They also use real-time streams of data to make changes if needed because of soil conditions, the amount of fertilizer applied or other factors.

The autonomous tractor will now let farmers hook up a plow behind a tractor, start the machine with a swipe of a smart phone and then leave it to rumble up and down a field on its own.

The driverless tractors are equipped with six pairs of cameras that work like human eyes and can provide a 360-degree image. When filtered through computer algorithms, the tractor is able to determine where it is in the field and will abruptly stop if there is anything unfamiliar in its path. Farmers often grow crops on different parcels of land that are miles apart, so while the tractor plows in one field a farmer can work at another, drive into town for supplies or spend time with their families at home. Given that less than 2% of Americans work on farms and rural populations have dwindled for decades, the autonomous tractors also are expected to help with chronic labor shortages.

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Q&A: DeBose tries to stay grounded ahead of big Oscars night



Ariana DeBose arrives at the 94th Academy Awards nominees luncheon on Monday, March 7, 2022, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

By SIGAL RATNER-ARIAS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Rita Moreno told her "Enjoy it, honey!" and that's what Ariana DeBose has been doing this awards season.

The actor, who has been sweeping every accolade for her fiery portrayal of Anita in Steven Spielberg's "West Side Story" — the same role that won Moreno the Academy Award in 1962 — is heading into the Oscars on March 27 as an undisputable favorite in the best supporting actress category after several key wins at the Screen Actors Guild Awards and Sunday's BAFTA ceremony.

It's been a long whirlwind journey of traveling the globe, meeting huge stars and public speaking, but DeBose is doing everything she can to stay grounded.

"I try to keep my feet on the ground and my heart in the heavens," she said in a recent interview via Zoom from her home in New York City, explaining that she sleeps when she can, turns her phone off, plays with her cat and dogs and tries to check in with her friends.

"This is an extraordinary experience. It's singular," she added. "It's impossible to describe and I won't be able to describe it until well after it's done. I'm trying to remain a human."

In a year that saw many Latinos nominated after there were barely any in 2021, DeBose, who is Afro-Latina and gay, also spoke about diversity and how she is just happy to represent the communities that she belongs to.

Remarks have been edited for brevity and clarity.

AP: Now that some time has passed since the release of the film and the nominations, have you had a chance to look back and process all that's happening to you?

DeBOSE: I think I need a little bit more time to fully understand everything that's happening. Then, I feel good! I'm full of gratitude, you know. I won't say that it's not an emotional time, I feel all of the emotions! There's a little bit of pressure, but there's genuine excitement, and it's a wonderful time to be an artist. I'm just excited that,

No. 1, the work got made; No. 2, it got seen, and that it's been received this way. Because so often, as artists we make work that isn't seen or isn't received well. So, to me, this is such a gift. It's given me the opportunity to be seen as a human, to be seen as an artist and to represent all of the communities that I belong to in a way that I'm very hopeful will keep the conversation moving forward.

AP: Without including yourself, you celebrated many of the Hispanic, Latin American and Spanish artists Oscar-nominated this year in an Instagram post. What do you feel when you see such range of candidates after there were barely any last year?

DeBOSE: I think it's important. I'm thrilled to see the work highlighted and celebrated. I did realize after the fact that I didn't include myself in that post, but I figured I talk about my work all the time on my social media, so let's celebrate the work of other folks! The real real of it all, especially right now, is that yes, my nomination is a significant moment, but it is one of many and

that is what is really thrilling. These nominations, they span the academy, they're not just acting nominations, they're crafts nominations. And when we talk about progress, we have to talk about getting people in front of the camera and behind the camera and into the writers rooms and in positions of power, so we can continue to tell our stories in an authentic way and expand the way that we get to tell our stories.

AP: Did Rita Moreno give you any advice for the big night?

DeBOSE: Oh no, she just said, "Enjoy it, honey!" Which honestly is the best advice you could give. Because, what else are you gonna do?

AP: Do you pay any attention to Vegas odds or the film critics who weigh in on whom they think will win?

DeBOSE: No! (Laughs) I mean, I'm aware of terms like front-runner, and I'm aware of the excitement surrounding the supporting actress category. And quite frankly, there should be excitement! They're incredible women included in this category. To celebrate all the different kinds of work, the different types of work, I think it's a thrilling space to be included in. I mean, I get to represent the communities I belong to, I get to represent a film I'm proud of and work I believe in, and I get to sit next to people like Dame Judi Dench. What!? It's just incredible.

AP: Costumes play a big role in "West Side Story." Can you tell us what you loved about the costumes and how they helped inform your mood and character?

DeBOSE: Well, Paul Tazewell, our incredible costume designer, gave me such a gift with Anita's dresses. I think we most noticeably talk about the "America" dresses. She's no longer wearing purple (like in the 1961 original movie); this Anita is a beam of light, she is a literal sunbeam in the gorgeous mustard yellow with the red skirt. She looks like she's on fire, she's full of love and passion. And that was a aift, because it is indicative of her lifeforce. And every time she spins it's an expression of her joy. I love that. It was a great opportunity to use a skirt as a prop.

AP: Speaking of wardrobe, do you know what you'll be wearing at the Oscars?

DeBOSE: I haven't fully decided yet, but what I lean towards I think will feel kind of like a surprise to some people. I can tell you is VERY Ariana DeBose, is quintessentially everything that I am.



Scoring spree: 50-point games are the rage in NBA right now

By TIM REYNOLDS **AP Basketball Writer**

Turns out, March has more madness than just college basketball.

The NBA is getting a taste as well.

Kyrie Irving's 60-point barrage at Orlando on Tuesday night was the seventh 50-point effort in the league so far this month - with half of March remaining. His career-best performance came one niaht after Minnesota's Karl-Anthony Towns also scored a career-high 60, a number nobody in the league had reached this season until this week.

Even Kevin Durant — one of the most elite scorers ever, someone who had 53 in Brooklyn's win over New York on Sunday — is marveling at what's happening right now.

"Sixty, the night after Karl Towns had an incredible performance and then to have Kyrie do it the next night, the league is an amazing place right now," Durant said. "You're seeing a lot of talent and skill being displayed, on display, every night. And this was one of the elite ones."

All of March has been a showcase for the elite ones. March's seven 50-point games have come in a span of 11 days. LeBron James started it on March 5 by scoring 56 for the Los Angeles Lakers against Golden State. Jayson Tatum had 54 points for Boston one day later against Brooklyn.

With that, the madness was off and running. Irving had 50 on March 8 at Charlotte. James had 50 again on Friday against Washington. Durant had his 53 on Sunday, Towns answered that with 60 on Monday and Irving then had a 60-point night of his own.

"As you see across the league, guys are just putting up crazy numbers," Irving said.

It matches the highest number of 50-point games in the same calendar month in the NBA in the last 60 years. August 2020 also had seven 50-point efforts, four of those being playoff



Brooklyn Nets guard Kyrie Irving (11) drives in front of Orlando Magic guard R.J. Hampton (13) during the first half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, March 15, 2022, in Orlando, Fla.

Associated Press

inside Walt Disney World. There were also seven such — all the way back to Degames in March 2019.

The last month with more nine of them that month, six Chamberlain had eight all

games at the restart bubble 50-point games in the NBA was nearly six decades ago cember 1962. There were

by Wilt Chamberlain of the San Francisco Warriors, the other three by Elgin Baylor of the Lakers.

by himself that October. He made 50-point nights look ordinary in those days; the NBA had 19 of them in December 1961, 15 in January 1962 and 12 in February

They've been considerably more sporadic since. That is, until this week.

"I feel like any time I touch the ball, I'm unstoppable," Towns said after his big night.

These days, he's not the only one who seems to be that way.

"When you're a kid, scoring a bunch of points, it means something," Irving said. "But when you're in the best league in the world, doing it against the greatest athletes that are playing our game, it means a little bit more."





Djokovic, Russian players expected to compete at French Open

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN AP Sports Writer

Novak Djokovic will be allowed to play at the French Open even if he is not vaccinated against COVID-19 as long as the coronavirus situation in France remains stable, organizers said Wednesday. Russian tennis players, including top-ranked Daniil Medvedev, will also be admitted to play in the tournament but as neutral athletes because of the war started by their country in neighboring Ukraine.

Organizers said there is nothing at the moment preventing Djokovic from defending his title at the clay-court Grand Slam. France this week lifted measures requiring the need to wear face masks in most settings and allowing people who aren't vaccinated back into restaurants, sports arenas and other venues.

"At this stage there is nothing to stop him returning to the courts," French Open director Amelie Mauresmo said at a news conference. Diokovic was deported from Australia in January after a legal battle over whether he should be allowed to enter the country, forcing him to miss the Australian Open. He told the BBC last month that he was willing to miss upcoming Grand Slam tournaments as well if they required him to get vaccinated.

Djokovic has won the



Daniil Medvedev, of Russia, serves to Gael Monfils, of France, at the BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament Monday, March 14, 2022, in Indian Wells, Calif.

Associated Press

French Open twice and has a total of 20 major titles, one short of the record held by Rafael Nadal after the Spaniard won this year's Australian Open.

French tennis federation president Gilles Moretton said that although Djokovic is now free to play, French authorities might be forced to introduce new restrictions if the virus situation deteriorates before the tournament starts on May 22. "It is not up to us," Moretton said. "Today there is a little

"It is not up to us," Moretton said. "Today there is a little virus that is going around. We are quite confident that the lights are green, but we are all cautious about what

has happened over the last two years." Asked whether Russian tennis players will be allowed to compete at the tournament in the light of the war in Ukraine, organizers said they plan to stick to decisions suspending Russia and ally Belarus but allowing their players to compete as neutral athletes. The seven groups that run the sport around the world have condemned the war; canceled events in Russia and Belarus; kicked those two nations out of the Billie Jean King Cup and Davis Cup team competitions; and announced on March 1 that players from those

countries will be allowed to compete in WTA, ATP and Grand Slam tournaments but not under the name or flag of Russia or Belarus.

"We are holding this line," said Amelie Oudea-Castera, the French tennis federation director general.

Other sports, including track and field, soccer and figure skating, have barred Russian and Belarusian athletes from competition.

Wimbledon organizers are having conversations with the British government about whether Russian players should be allowed to compete at the grass-court tournament this

year if they don't distance themselves from President Vladimir Putin. Oudea-Castera said French organizers don't plan to start a detailed and individualized analysis of players' individual situations, which "can be extraordinarily dependent on the family situations experienced by each of them." Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, the day Medvedev was assured of moving atop the ATP rankings for the first time while competing at the Mexico Open. "Watching the news from home, waking up here in Mexico, was not easy," Medvedev said then. "By being a tennis player, I want to promote peace all over the world. We play in so many different countries; I've been in so many countries as a junior and as a pro. It's just not easy to hear all this news. ... I'm all for peace.'

Without any outdoor restrictions in place, Moretton said he expects the Roland Garros venues to be used at "maximum capacity" this year after the previous two editions were affected by the pandemic. Tickets went on sale this month, and Moretton said about 500,000 seats out of the 600,000 available for the day sessions have already been sold. For the 10 night sessions on Court Philippe Chatrier, only 50,000 tickets remain available from the 150,000 on sale.

